

Kern County Commission On Aging

Yolanda Prado, Chairperson
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REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING
MINUTES

February 27, 2023, 1:00 p.m.
Video Meeting via Zoom

OPENING**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Prado called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE & MOMENT OF SILENCE:

The flag salute was completed and a moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

*(*Chairperson, **Vice Chairperson, *** Parliamentarian)*

Commission Members Present:

Susan Bodnar, Gloria Brown, Doris Duquette, Sherry Gomez, Devora Gonzalez, Barbara Goodlow, Kris Grasty, Norma Jackson, Jan Lemucchi, Ellen Linder, **Stephanie Lynch, Sandy Morris, Jeremy Oliver, Linda Oswald, Roger Oswald, *Yolanda Prado, ***Judy Snyder, and Debra Teofilo

Excused Absences: Kevin Alvey and Bill Wright

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT**Honorary Commission Members Present:**

None.

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Martin Reynoso – AAA Planner/Healthy Living Supervisor
StaciAnne Milsom – Administrative Services Officer
Laura M. Juarez – Office Services Coordinator

Guests:

Lito Morillo, Chelsea Palmer, Sally Westlake, Teresa McFarland, Leslie Devitt, Lourdes Garcia, Catherine Vasquez, Tammy Hartsch, Gayla Hughes, Hermandeep Dhaliwal, and Jackie Lopez

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. A letter of support was sent by the COA Foundation on behalf of Kern Council of Governments for Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grant to Prepare a Kern County Rural Transit Consolidation Strategy
2. A letter of concern was sent by the COA to the Kern County Fair Board of Directors regarding Kern County Senior Day at the Kern County Fair.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

None.

Commissioner Comments :

1. Chair Prado announced the COA meetings will be held in person beginning in March 2023, per The Brown Act. She reminded Commissioners to please let Laura know who will be attending and having lunch at the senior centers so they can prepare enough meals to include Commissioners and Ex-Officio members. There is a suggested donation of \$3 for seniors 60 and over, and suggested donation of \$6 for those under 60 years old. Jeremy Oliver added that there are three Bills pending current legislative operators to look at amendments to the Brown Act. The links to read those pending Bills are as follows:

AB 557:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB557&firstNav=tracking

SB 411:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB411&firstNav=tracking

SB 537:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB537&firstNav=tracking

2. Vice-Chair Lynch discussed how to identify and recognize seniors who reach the milestone of 100 years. It was recommended that the Sunshine Committee take the lead on this project. Commissioner Goodlow, Commissioner Morris, Vice-Chair Lynch, Commissioner Grasty, Commissioner L. Oswald, and Jeremy Oliver volunteered to assist Commissioner Duquette. A Zoom meeting will be scheduled with this subcommittee to come up with a plan.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** for January 23, 2023, Regular Commission on Aging meeting were approved with revisions to pages 7 and 9.
Motion/Second/Abstained/Opposed (M/S/A/O)
Lynch/Snyder/Grasty/None - Motion carried.
- **APPROVAL OF COA BYLAWS REVISED 01/11/2023:** the COA Bylaws were approved as revised and to send to the Board of Supervisors for their approval.
M/S/A/O – Lemucchi/Lynch/Brown/None – Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Leslie Wallace

Not in attendance.

VETERANS SERVICE – Jose Lopez

Josh Dhanens and Jose Lopez are both attending a conference in Sacramento but sent the following report read by Chair Prado: Josh Dhanens resigned as the Director of Veterans Services effective February 10, 2023, and the new Interim Director is Jose Lopez. Josh will continue to work at Veterans Services. The Department continues to serve all of Kern County telephonically, in person (by appointment), and by home calls, as needed.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Elaine Anthony

Elaine Anthony was not able to attend but sent in the following report for Chair Prado to read:

COVID Update

CDC Community Transmission Level: Low

Case Rate: 4.5 up from 3.9

Positivity: 6.4% down from 5.8%

Hospitalized: 50 up from 36

ICU: 5 down from 7

Modeling predicts cases to begin increasing early to mid-March and continue to increase through at least late April.

RSV and Flu

2/12/23 - 2/18/23

Kern Flu Activity: Minimal

Average Flu Positivity: 13.5%; Current: 0.7%

Average Flu Hospital Admission %: 1.1%; Current: 0.1%

Average RSV Positivity: 9.9%; Current: 2.5%

Average RSV Hospital Admission %: 0.7%; Current 0.4%

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES – Lourdes Garcia

Lourdes Garcia reported the Volunteer Senior Outreach Program (VSOP) is very active with our seniors as we start to get out of this pandemic. We are getting more volunteers, which is great. We were down to 2 volunteers but now we're up to 7, which allows them time for social visits with those seniors that are still isolated. They're constantly getting referrals, and starting to do more outreach, make presentations, and educating the community about mental health symptoms. As today's guest speaker shared, there are seniors who call 9-1-1 and have difficulties with navigating the telephone system – those are the seniors that we want to engage in and go out and talk to and just provide our services to because things that might sound so simple to us, can be quite difficult for them. VSOP wants to be able to connect with them and just provide them with additional support and resources.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Gayla Hughes

Gayla Hughes reported due to the unwinding of the Public Health Emergency, they are currently working on their return to office protocols. They have been working on a hybrid schedule where they worked at home one week, and then worked in the office for the next week. Effective March 20, 2023, they will be returning most of their staff to the office, and their hybrid schedule will revert to just working from home one day a week instead of the entire week. All management employees will return to the office fulltime. They're going to open to where clients can come in and be seen in person and get more services in person than just the few that they were offering during the pandemic. They're going to resume Medi-Cal renewals starting June 1, 2023, so they will have Medi-Cal refresher training for the next two weeks in their office to retrain all their staff on the new Medi-Cal renewal processing. If you have seniors who are getting flyers and information about their renewals, please let them know that once they get those packets that they do need to complete them and return them to DHS office. When the pandemic went into effect, the State of California was giving an emergency CalFresh allotment of \$95 to households, even to those who were only eligible for \$1, they would receive the max allotment regardless of their income. Beginning in March, those additional funds are going to stop, so now they will only receive what they're eligible to receive. There won't be those additional emergency services that clients have been receiving. This is unfortunate especially for seniors who receive social security based on unearned income because they don't get a lot of those deductions, which means they could only be eligible for \$16 a month in CalFresh benefits. Letters have been sent two months ago to inform them of this change. It's also been advertised, and monthly flyers are still being mailed out. In addition, when they call into the office through their IVR Call Center, they will first hear a recorded message informing them of discontinuance of the emergency CalFresh allotment.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Not in attendance.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez reported they have the home Access Grant program that provides grab bars, handrails, and ramps for low-income, permanently disabled individuals. The income limits are based on household size, and just as an example, a household of one, you would have to earn below \$43 thousand a year. A household of two would be like \$49 thousand per year, and then it goes up in equal increments for each additional person. The home improvement loan is for homeowners to apply. That's at no interest and no monthly payment loan, but it is a mortgage that is put as a lien on the property. This is to repair or replace what's existing like plumbing, electrical, paint, roof, heating, and cooling. Because it is a loan, it does have to be paid back when they sell the house, or when they move from the home, but as long as they're low-income and live in the home, they do not have to make monthly payments. All of their programs have an already participating rotating contractor bid list of which they use to determine the costs of the project, and then, as the work is being done, they pay that contractor through the funds. They monitor the work, making sure that all the work was done, and that the homeowner is satisfied. They do not go out to assess the home for fall prevention, but Aging and Adult Services does have a Fall Prevention program (661-868-1004). If anyone's interested in either the Home Access or Home Improvement loan programs, have them call Kandi Mosqueda at (661) 862-5024. They also have flyers if anyone is interested. They can call the same number to request them.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Tammy Hartsch

Tammy Hartsch shared a PDF copy of ILC's brochure. They're working on trying to reach more individuals and organizations within the community to bring awareness to the services that they offer. Tammy asked if everyone would look at the brochure to see all the services that they offer at ILC. They're also working on enhancing and increasing their intake department because they've had an overflow of individuals contacting them for intake for different services. They receive about 30 to 40 calls a day for intakes. They are getting out and participating in outreaches and are also working on their marketing to brand ILC and letting the community know about their services and that they're here to help.

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Leslie Devitt

Leslie Devitt reported on the 2023 criminal trends on elders. For the first six weeks of the first quarter, there were 5 stolen vehicles which tend to be older model vehicles. There were 18 reports of family violence, which is number one crime trend for elders, of which, 85% of the cases is an intimate partner or family member. There were 0 workplace violence, and 0 homicides. The DEAR newsletter is getting popular. She has received many requests to be added to her email distribution, and even just learned that Strata Credit Union gives it out at the Kern County retiree's luncheon and to their elder clients.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT-

AREA PLAN UPDATE – Martin Reynoso

Martin Reynoso shared that he is working on the 2023-2024 Area Plan Update for PSA 33, for all of Kern County. The Area Agency on Aging is tasked by the California Department of Aging to develop a four-year Area Plan. Before each area plan is developed, the Department conducts a countywide needs assessment, which is designed to help us target

older adults in the county, specifically those with the greatest economic need, and paying attention to low-income minority populations. They also target Native Americans and other groups that are mentioned in the regulations, including rural older adults. California developed the Master Plan for Aging and a lot of different stakeholders in the state of California have been working completing this. Here in Kern County, there will be ways for us to align with the Master Plan for Aging and make sure that those areas are covered. The Master Plan for Aging outlines five main goals:

1. Housing for All Stages & Ages
2. Health Reimagined
3. Inclusion & Equity, Not Isolation
4. Caregiving That Works
5. Affording Aging

This year, we're working on the next four-year plan, and in the past, we have been assisted by members of the Commission on Aging and is seeking assistance once again from the Commissioners. The deadline for the Area Plan Update is November 2023. Commissioner Teofilo and Commissioner Lemucchi volunteered to assist with the needs assessment. If anyone else would like to help, please let him know.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jeremy Oliver

Jeremy Oliver reported the following:

FEDERAL

The Biden Administration announced it will end the Public Health Emergency (PHE) (and national emergency) declarations on May 11, 2023. The government has been paying for COVID-19 vaccines, some tests, and certain treatments under the PHE declaration. When it expires, those costs will be transferred to private insurance and government health plans.

STATE

Governor Newsom has declared that the COVID-19 State of Emergency will be lifted at the end of February 2023. Additionally, he signed a proclamation terminating 26 open States of Emergency dating back to 2017. These include various fires, prior storms, and other incidents, including the Monkey Pox (MPox) emergency proclaimed in August of last year, coinciding with the termination of the federal public health emergency on MPox.

The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) released their report regarding the multiyear budget outlook. The LAO is estimating the deficit to be approximately \$7 billion larger than the Governor's proposal but is not recommending using reserves at this point. The Governor's budget estimated \$23 billion-dollar short fall in anticipated revenues.

There have been multiple grants released from the State related to establishing Age and Disability friendly communities, Brain Health, and Behavioral Health evidence-based programs that the Department is exploring. Some will be partnerships with Behavioral Health and or Public Health.

Locally

The Department will be ending telework returning fully to the office on March 1, 2023. We have added an additional Supervisor position to IHSS program and continues to fill vacancies in Nutrition, Health Education, and Access to Technology programs. March is Meals on Wheels Awareness Month, and we anticipate the Board of Supervisors to issue a proclamation in support of the month, and the Department is working with Public Health and Behavioral Health through their "Grounded in Health" campaign to promote additional awareness for age related needs. The Board of Supervisors plans to review the appointment of a Director for the Department in tomorrow's Board meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BYLAWS COMMITTEE – L. Oswald, K. Grasty, B. Goodlow

No report.

CALIFORNIA SENIOR LEGISLATURE (CSL) – J. Lemucchi, J. Snyder

No report.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Morris, K. Grasty

Commissioner Morris reported Norma Jackson was reappointed by Director of Aging and Adult Services. Her new term expires 02/01/2025. There were three new appointments. Debra Teofilo was appointed by District 1. Her term expires 06/17/2024. Sherry Gomez was appointed by District 3. Her term expires 06/17/2024. Mae Ellen Linder was appointed by North of the River Recreation and Park District. Her term expires 01/10/2024. There were no resignations. There is one expired term, Bill Wright. Alzheimer's Disease Association of Kern County is working on his reappointment. There are no appointments soon to expire. There are two vacancies: 1 in District 1, and 1 in District 5. We received two new applications: James Riccomini, received 01/31/2023, and Teresa Barnum, received 02/13/2023. Old applications received in 2022 are from Lex Fairfax, received 10/12/2022 (still interested in serving), Teresa McFarland, received 10/13/2022 (still interested in serving), and Anabel Hernandez, received 11/29/2022 (still interested in serving). The Commissioner Appointment Committee will continue to review applications and will make recommendations for appointments as needed.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – K. Grasty, S. Lynch

No report.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – B. Goodlow, K. Grasty, J. Lemucchi, S. Lynch, L. Oswald, Y. Prado, J. Snyder

Chair Prado reported the committee met February 1, 2023, and discussed today's agenda, Commissioner correspondence, COA Bylaws, and Centenarian recognition.

IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS) ADVISORY – J. Snyder

No report. The next meeting is scheduled for March 16, 2023.

LONG TERM CARE – S. Bodnar, D. Duquette, D. Gonzalez, N. Jackson, R. Oswald

Commissioner Gonzalez reported Parkview Julian nursing home is under new management. The Ombudsman program is unsure if Parkview Julian still has a contract with the Veterans Administration. There is also now a new program within the California Department of Aging called "The Office of Long-term Care Patient Representative Office". This new program now assists nursing home residents with no legal surrogate and without capacity by participating in their IDT for recommended medical treatments. Kern's Patient Representative is Therese Trebaol. Assemblywoman Dr. Jasmeet Bains will be meeting with the Kern County Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program in March to learn more about the program and services.

MARKETING & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE – Y. Prado, D. Duquette, S. Lynch, S. Morris, J. Snyder

Chair Prado reported she and Parliamentarian Snyder will be reaching out to the new Commissioners to schedule new Commissioner orientation.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE – G. Brown; N. Jackson

Commissioner Brown reported COA Officer Nominations will take place this year. Please start submitting your nominations for Chair, Vice-Chair, and Parliamentarian to her, Commissioner Goodlow, and Commissioner Jackson.

SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY – B. Goodlow

Commissioner Goodlow reported the Bakersfield Senior Center kicked off Black History month on February 1, 2023, with a black history program that was very successful. They had a Valentine's Day celebration at the center, and they also had a Monte Carlo celebration with a fashion show.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

Commissioner Duquette reported birthday cards were mailed to those who had birthdays in January and February, and she will continue to mail birthday and get-well cards as needed. She will need to get the birthdays of the new Commissioners.

THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING COUNSEL OF CALIFORNIA (TACC) – Wright, Vacant (Alternate)

No report.

TRANSPORTATION – Y. Prado, J. Lemucchi

Commissioner Lemucchi reported the committee met February 8, 2023. The main focus was informing them of the opening and completion of Highway 58 to the 99 by the end of February or early March. Other grants that are coming available for the public transit systems for them to take advantage of.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown, S. Lynch

All certificates were distributed to senior nutrition volunteers. Commissioner Brown asked what the Commission will give to senior nutrition volunteers as we visit their senior centers during Regular meetings. This will be discussed during the Executive Committee meeting.

INFORMATION ITEMS –

- Lito Morillo thanked Gayla Hughes and her team, along with Aging and Adult Services staff for the work they did together to get Medi-Cal for a client they have in common. He also shared that the discussion to merge Aging and Adult Services with the Department of Human Services has picked back up. If this merge were to happen, everything would remain the same in terms of location, letterhead, and structure in general. The only fundamental change would be that the Director of Aging & Adult Services would report directly to the Director of Human Services rather than the Board of Supervisors, which many other counties have as a structure. Currently, in Kern County, the Director of Aging & Adult Services reports to the Board of Supervisors. As additional information is made available it will be shared with all.

NEXT MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, March 1, 2023 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, March 20, 2023 1:00 p.m. Bakersfield Senior Center 530 4th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93304 (COA Ex-Officio Members and the public may attend in person or via Zoom. Please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052 for the link to join)

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver
Secretary

JO/lj